

American Junior Red Cross

DECEMBER • 1955





Gifts from The Netherlands

"It's almost like Christmas!" Barbara Parks and Henry Huie of Ansonia, Conn., smile as they open boxes of gifts sent by The Netherlands Junior Red Cross to children in the flood-stricken areas of north-eastern United States. The boxes, filled and shipped by JRCers in the towns of Delft and Haamstede, Holland, were themselves sent in appreciation for help which had been given to sufferers in Holland's floods two years ago by the American Junior Red Cross.

COVER

- *Here We Go A-Caroling by Leonard Weisgard 1

WE KEEP THE SPIRIT OF GOOD WILL TO MEN

- Gifts from The Netherlands 2
Pleasant Hours (poster from Austria) 9
Red Cross in Vietnam (pictures) 14
Merrily, Merrily (pictures) 22

CHRISTMAS IN THIS AND OTHER LANDS

- *Sinterklaas Eve 4
*White House Christmas 10
*The Little Red Christmas Tree 16

READ-ALoud STORY FOR LITTLE PEOPLE

- *How the Littlest Elf Helped Santa 24

FOR HOLIDAY TIME

- *A Christmas Story (puzzle) 8
The Evergreen (poem) 12
Happy Holidays (safety tips) 20
Hanukkah Candles (poem) 26
*Christmas Is Here (song) 27

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Step by Step We Climb

WE KEEP THE SPIRIT OF GOOD WILL TO MEN

Our Cover

"Here we go a-caroling," sing happy children in the frosty night air. Their pet dog wants to join in the chorus, too, as the birds echo the song high on snowy branches. Leonard Weisgard, the artist, made this beautiful cover for our December NEWS.

The Greatest Gift

JRC members in Omaha (Douglas County Chapter), Nebraska, have many ideas as to what they think is the "Greatest Gift." Here are a few of them:

*The greatest gift
As all of us know,
Is the gift of our Savior,
Born long, long ago.*

CLOMA HOCK
Clifton Hill School

The gift of friendship is the greatest gift. With friends we are happy; without them we are miserable. We receive Christmas gifts because we have friends. We have friends because God gave us the greatest gift—friendship.

PAT BRENNAN
Holy Name School

The greatest gift is not a wagon, bicycle, or any toy. The greatest gift is appreciation for what you get. No matter how big or small it is, as long as you appreciate it, it will be the biggest gift you ever received.

AUSTIN DRAPER
Florence School

The greatest gift was the very first gift of Christmas. That was love, love for the little baby Jesus from His mother Mary.

LINDA EMMETT
Robbins School

*Christmas time has many joys
That don't depend on getting toys.
We can help in many ways
To bring to others
Happy days.*

JOE LIMPRECHT
Washington School

What would YOU say was the greatest gift?

LOIS S. JOHNSON, editor.

“**N**OW we are ready. Let Sinterklaas come!” Mevrouw van Speek’s rosy face beamed. The Dutch woman’s blue eyes twinkled with pleasure as she looked at her family. They were all gathered together now, in the big kitchen which was also the living room of their Netherlands farmhouse.

Her husband, Mynheer van Speek, had just poked the fire in the great fireplace into a bright blaze. Hendrik and Roosje, her two children, and their cousin Katrienka, had helped her spread the clean white cloth out in the center of the kitchen floor.

“No time is so wonderful as Sinterklaas Eve,” Roosje said to Katrienka. “And this year it is better than ever because you and Aunt Betje have come all the way from Amsterdam to be with us.”

For these Dutch children, December 5 was even more exciting than Christmas itself. It was the feast of their beloved Saint Nicholas, whose name, somehow through the years, had come to be pronounced Sinterklaas.

Sinterklaas Eve was the time for feasting and fun, for presents and playing jokes, for songs and surprises. Best of all was the moment when there would be a knock on the door, and the thin figure of the good old Saint would appear in his long red robe and tall hat.

“This year it is Roosje’s turn to tell the story of Sinterklaas,” said Mynheer van Speek. “She shall tell it now while I go to make sure the cows are all safe and warm.” The farmer smiled at the children. He winked an eye gaily at his wife and Aunt Betje as he went off into the part of the farmhouse which served as a barn.

Roosje felt a bit shy when all the others stopped talking to listen to her. But she soon forgot her shyness in the fun of telling the old tale.

“Sinterklaas is really Saint Nicholas who lived long ago in an eastern land far away. He was a very good man. He was a bishop of the church, and he went about doing good, especially for children.” Roosje had heard the old story so many times that she knew it well.



“Sinterklaas! Sinterklaas!” the children cried happily at sight of the tall man in the red robe.

“In that eastern land, so long ago, there were three little girls whose mother had died. Their good father worked hard, but he was not very strong. Somehow he never could earn enough money to feed his three daughters.

“Little by little the good man sold his belongings to buy food for his children. And at last there came a December day when there was nothing at all left in his hut to sell.

“‘What shall I do now? We must have food, or we shall all starve to death.’” Roosje’s voice was as sad as if she were the poor man whose words she was speaking. She seemed almost to be crying, as she went on.

“‘There is no way for me but to sell one of my daughters. Some family that needs help in its household will pay me well for her.’ The poor man was weeping when he went to his

Sinterklass Eve

By FRANCES CARPENTER



bed. He could not sleep for thinking how dreadful it would be to sell one of his children.

"Now, the very next morning, on his kitchen floor in front of the fireplace, he found a fat leather purse, filled with gold coins. Oh, he was glad! Now he could buy enough food to last for a long time. He would not have to sell his dear daughter.

"But in time the money was spent. Then once more there was nothing for that man to do but to sell one of his daughters. Again he went to bed weeping. And again in the morning he found a fat leather purse on the floor.

"The third time, the poor man decided to watch for the good friend who had brought him gold in his need. He sat, all through the night, wideawake by the fireplace.

Illustrated by
Ann Eshner

"When the leather purse fell at his feet, the man ran out of his hut. He was in time to catch hold of his visitor's red gown. He saw his tall red bishop's hat, and his sleigh drawn by a white horse. So he knew right away that this was good Saint Nicholas.

"Over and over that man told the tale. The story soon spread all over the world. And ever since then, people say, each December 5, Sinterklaas throws gifts into the kitchens of good people like that poor man."

Everyone clapped when Roosje finished her Sinterklaas story. They laughed when she added, "Oh, I do wish that Sinterklaas would bring me something gold. A ring like Katrienka's would do very well."

Her family laughed at this because, ever since Katrienka's last visit, they had heard of nothing else but a gold ring for Roosje. In vain her mother told her daughter that gold rings like Katrienka's could only be found in a great city like Amsterdam. Her father said such a gold ring would cost too many gulden. Still Roosje wanted nothing else in the world so much as a ring like her cousin's.

"Let's sing a song for Sinterklaas." Mevrouw van Speek wanted to change the subject. "Our music will stop him as he rides over the land behind his white horse."

All the van Speeks liked to sing. Everyone in the family belonged to the village singing club. Their farmhouse kitchen now rang with their clear happy voices. And the words of their Sinterklaas song meant something like this—

*Put your long red mantle on,
Saint Nicholas, good holy man!
Drive your sleigh to Amsterdam,
Then find us quickly as you can.*

Hardly was the song finished than there was a knock at the door of the farmhouse.

"Sinterklaas! Sinterklaas!" Roosje and Hendrik and their cousin Katrienka clapped their hands at the sight of the tall man in the red robe, trimmed with white. A long white beard covered the lower part of his face. His high bishop's hat was pulled down

almost to his eyes. The children could not see very much of his face, but what they could see was a good deal like the face of Mynheer van Speek.

Sinterklaas looked at them with smiling eyes. But his voice was deep and stern as he stood before them with his bag in his arms.

"Who has been good here? Who has been bad? If there are bad children here, I will call my servant, Black Piet. He shall bring in the switches out of my sleigh."

"Everyone is good here, Sinterklaas. Oh, very good!" Mevrouw van Speek smiled as she spoke. "Roosje helps me make cheese. Hendrik tends the cows. Katrienka never is cross. There is no need for Black Piet and his switches in this farmhouse tonight."

The children wriggled with delight when the visitor put his hand into his bag. Again, and again, a shower of candies and nuts and tiny sweet cakes fell on the white sheet on their kitchen floor.

"You missed Sinterklaas, Father, what kept you so long?" the children's mother cried when Mynheer van Speek came back again into the kitchen.

"The cows had to have a Sinterklaas supper, too." The jolly farmer was laughing as if he knew a secret. "But I am in time for the presents."

"Where are the presents, dear wife?" Mynheer van Speek looked anxiously all around the great room. "What is Sinterklaas Eve without any presents? How could you forget?" He pretended to be cross because he did not see any gifts.

The children giggled. Sinterklaas Eve was present-time, of course. But always the presents were hidden from sight. Always each gift must be a happy surprise.

"The children have better eyes than yours, Father," Mevrouw van Speek laughed. "They'll find the presents." This was the signal for the present-hunt to begin.

"Maybe, oh maybe, there will be a gold ring for me!" Roosje thought to herself. And she crawled under a table to look inside a great kettle of shining yellow brass.

When she crawled out again, she held a box in her hand. It was marked for her mother, and inside it was a shiny new pair of scissors.

Beside the big blue tiled stove, Hendrik discovered a curious round bundle with his father's name written upon it.

"What kind of present is this?" Mynheer van Speek cried when he opened the bundle on his lap. "A loaf of bread! An everyday loaf of bread!" He turned it over and over with pretended disgust. Then he cried "Oh, just what I wanted!" For the loaf fell apart, and he lifted up a fine pipe.

Hendrik's own gift at first seemed to be just a huge carrot. But it, too, had been scooped out and a pocket-knife with shining sharp blades was hidden inside it.

A bundle of hay covered bright new ice skates for Katrienka. And Aunt Betje's knit bedjacket was tied up in a newspaper inside an old round cheese box.

"Oh, where is my present?" Roosje found it hard to wait for the package marked with her name.

"Did you look inside your baby bed?" her mother asked the little girl.

Roosje ran to the wooden cradle which stood near the fireplace. Sure enough, there was a big box there, under a cloth.

But it was her father's name that was written upon that box. When he lifted its lid, another box was inside, this one marked "Hendrik." It was only when Hendrik found her name on the paper bag inside the second box that they knew it was really for Roosje.

The little girl's face was all smiles. She even was smiling when she took out of the bag a lump of dirty black peat such as they burned in their fire. She knew there was some trick about this black lump of peat.

Suddenly she found the crack in it, and she opened it up like any box. Her eyes now were as bright as the lighted candles that twinkled on the long supper table. For out into her hand there fell a little gold ring.

"Just like Katrienka's," Roosje cried joyously, as she tried it on her finger.

And so it was! Her Aunt Betje had bought the gold ring for her parents to give her, in the very same Amsterdam jewelry store.

For admiring her ring, the happy girl could scarcely eat the fine feast that was spread on the Sinterklaas Eve table. There was a savory goose. There were sweet cakes and pies. And a new cheese had been cut. Everyone ate and ate until he could eat no more.

Then at last, all the children were tired and ready for bed. They ran to set their big wooden shoes in a row in front of the fireplace. Hendrik put into his shoe the carrot in which his knife had been hidden. Katrienka stuffed into hers the bundle of hay. These were for the white horse that would bring Sinterklaas back to this farmhouse during the night.

Roosje ran to get a few cakes and a piece of cheese for the good Saint himself; then



Roosje's face was all smiles when she found just what she wanted in the lump of peat.

the three children joined hands while they sang the last song of that wonderful Sinterklaas Eve.

*Saint Nicholas Kapoentje,
Leave something in my little shoes!
Leave something in my little boots!
Oh, thank you, dear Saint Nicholas.*

Humming the song to themselves again, the children climbed happily into their beds. They knew what would happen when morning came. The carrot and the hay, the cakes and the cheese in Roosje's shoes would be

gone. Perhaps Sinterklaas and his white horse did eat them up.

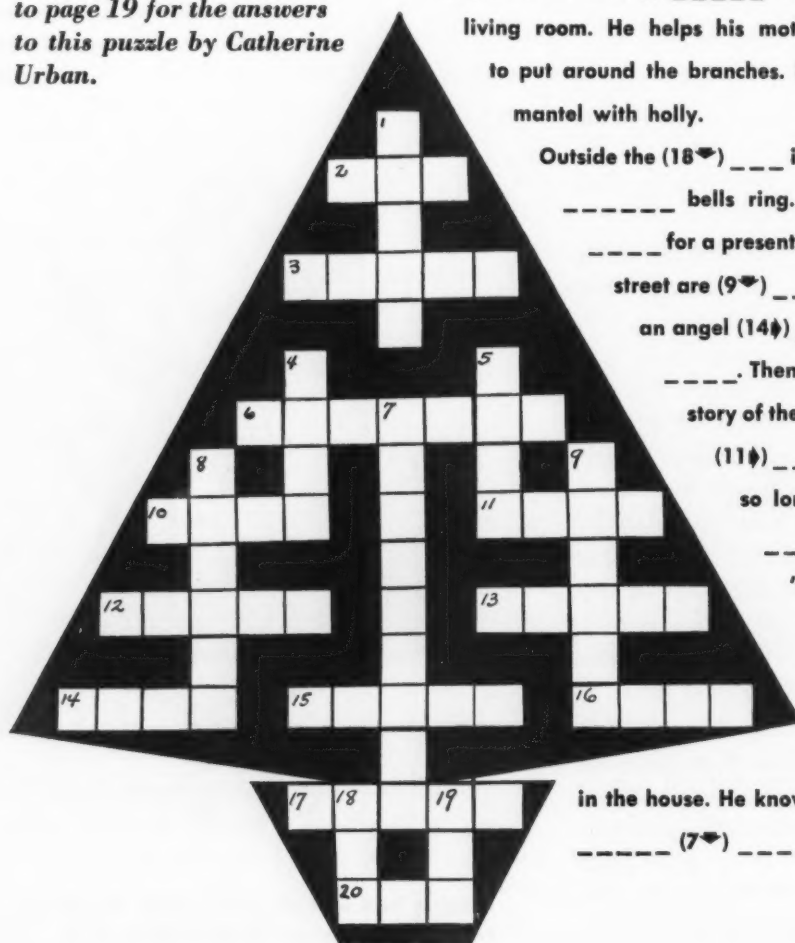
They would find their wooden shoes full of small toys, candies, and nuts. There would be cookies in the shape of a Sinterklaas. There would be gingerbread boys and girls, the little cooky horses all iced with white.

This was the way it always had been ever since they could remember. This was the way it always was on Sinterklaas morning in all the comfortable houses on the polder farms of the Netherlands.

THE END

A Christmas Story

See if you can fill in the squares before you turn to page 19 for the answers to this puzzle by Catherine Urban.



It is the (13) _____ before (7) _____ (19) _____ helps his father (3) _____ the big (16) _____ into the living room. He helps his mother string (6) _____ to put around the branches. He helps her (20) _____ the mantel with holly.

Outside the (18) _____ is crisp and (4) _____ (8) _____ bells ring. (19) _____ wants a (10) _____ for a present. All the (15) _____ on the street are (9) _____ with lights. Dad puts an angel (14) _____ on the tip of the (16) _____ Then (19) _____'s mother tells the story of the little (12) _____ who was (11) _____ in a manger (5) _____ so long ago and of the wise (2) _____ who traveled far to see him. "(1) _____ (7) _____ I" they say as they go to bed. (19) _____ can almost (17) _____ the good smells in the house. He knows that it will be a very (1) _____ (7) _____ tomorrow!



PLEASANT HOURS

"Give yourself and others pleasant hours," says this Christmas poster from the Austrian Junior Red Cross.



WHITE HOUSE CHRISTMAS

By HELEN REEDER CROSS

Illustrated by Gene Langley

THERE WAS a Christmas some 50 years ago when the White House came close to having no brightly trimmed tree. You might suppose this was because the President's family was all grown up. But, strangely enough, it was a year when the mansion rang with the laughter of children. For the President of the United States was Theodore Roosevelt. And the corridors of the great house echoed to the pillow fights and Indian war games of his two daughters and four lively sons.

No father was ever fonder of his children than Teddy Roosevelt, as everyone called the President. Busy though he was with the nation's affairs, he found time every day for

romping with his boys and girls. It never annoyed him to hear of their playful pranks, as long as no harm was done.

In fact, the President often shared their fun. He, too, loved the white rat that Kermit kept in his pocket for startling dignified visitors. He liked nothing better than a wild obstacle race with the boys. He even laughed when Archie smuggled his pony up in the elevator to his bedroom. Most of all, the President loved outdoor life and the natural beauties of America.

Besides his enormous sense of fun, Theodore Roosevelt was a President who wished to serve his country well. That was why in December of the family's first year in the



On Christmas Eve Teddy Roosevelt and his family were all up late, romping together and decking the White House for the big day.

White House he forbade the children to have a Christmas tree.

"Look, fellows," he said seriously one December day. "I know we've always had a tree before. But we live in the White House now. The White House sets the fashion for the nation. Think of America's forests. What if every family in the United States rushed out and cut down a tree. Copying the Roosevelts?"

"There are millions of trees in America!" Alice pouted.

Her father patted Alice's curls. "But soon our country will be bare and ugly. Forests are our greatest natural treasure, Mr. Pinchot says." Mr. Pinchot was America's first forester and a close friend of the Roosevelts.

"Just a tiny fir tree to set on a table!" Quentin begged. "With candles and a star on top."

"No tree," their father said firmly. "Why, only last week I signed the Conservation Bill

to protect America's forests from careless and greedy woodcutters. Now no one may cut trees from the new National Forests."

"Don't tease your father, dears," the children's mother said gently. "Going without a tree is a small price to pay for being the proud family of the President. I'm sure we'll have a happy holiday, tree or not."

But the boys, especially Quentin, were far from happy. He was too little to understand that because they were the "first family" of the United States, the Roosevelts must set a good example.

That night Archie heard muffled sobs from Quentin's bed.

"What's the matter?" he asked anxiously.

"N-n-nothing much," Quentin replied. "I just wish our father wasn't President. Then we could do whatever we pleased, like we used to. We could have a Christmas tree!"

"More than anything else Father wants to save America's forests," Archie told his little

brother patiently. "You know how he loves the out-of-doors. Now he's President he has a chance to protect our country's trees."

"I know," Quentin said sadly. "But one little tree wouldn't matter."

Archie understood. He was sorry to see his littlest brother unhappy. Suddenly he thought of something. He lay awake, planning a surprise for Quentin.

On the day before Christmas the White House, like every other home in America, was full of excitement. The presidential mansion was trimmed with ribbons and holly wreaths. Upstairs, where the Roosevelt family lived, there was much rustling of paper and hiding of lumpy packages. Archie was busiest of all. He held several conferences with the head gardener and the elevator boy.

"You must go to bed and to sleep early tonight," he told Quentin.

"Why?" his little brother pouted. "I always stay awake until you come to bed."

"Not this time," Archie told him firmly. "Not if you want a present from me."

"That's different," Quentin agreed quickly. "I'll do it. Because it's Christmas."

It was late before President and Mrs. Roosevelt, like parents everywhere, had finished their holiday preparations. At last six stockings hung bulging from the mantel in their bedroom. In the library a row of six little tables was loaded with tempting packages of every size and shape.

"We haven't forgotten a single thing," Mrs. Roosevelt said at last.

"Except a Christmas tree," her husband said sadly. "Do you think little Quentin understands why we cannot cut a tree for the White House?" he asked his wife anxiously.

"He will understand when he is older," she replied. "When he has hiked with you and his brothers in the great new National Forests. Then he will be proud that his father has tried to save America's trees."

"I'll just slip down to his room for a minute," Mr. Roosevelt said. "To be sure the child is asleep."

He tiptoed to the younger boys' room,



THE EVERGREEN

By JIMMY SCHRUPP

Campus Laboratory School
San Diego State College (Calif.)

*The evergreen makes a beautiful scene,
With hanging branches, a radiant green.
People trim it with lovely things,
And near the tree, everyone sings.*

*The evergreen makes a beautiful scene,
With hanging branches, a radiant green.*

opened the door, and stopped in amazement. For there on the night table between the two beds stood a tiny Christmas tree. Its ornaments and tinsel shone in the moonlight. Just then Archie stirred and opened his eyes.

"Oh!" he exclaimed guiltily and sat up in bed. "Are you angry with me, Father? Quentin wanted a Christmas tree so terribly."

"You disobeyed me," his father said sadly. He twisted his mustache as he always did when worried. "This isn't like you, Archie."

"It wasn't cut from our National Forests," Archie said eagerly. "The head gardener cut the little spruce from the White House lawn. He said it needed cutting. It was growing too close to another tree to get any sunshine. It would have grown stunted and crooked."

"Perhaps I'd better take your tree, Archie," his father said thoughtfully. "A secret, forbidden tree would not make Quentin happy. Nor you either." He picked up the little spruce and carried it to the door. Then, seeing Archie's crestfallen face, he added, "Go to sleep now, son. We will have a happy day tomorrow. Wait and see."

The President went to his study. There, though it was very late, Theodore Roosevelt rang a bell. This was followed by much commotion. Things didn't settle down quietly until long after the winter moon had set.

Like boys and girls everywhere, on Christmas morning the Roosevelt children woke

early. They piled out of bed with whoops and shouts. Still in their night-clothes, all six rapped excitedly at their parents' door.

"Merry Christmas!" they shouted, racing to the mantel where their stockings hung fat and lumpy. There was much happy confusion. Every tiny gift was exclaimed over. At last with a mock roar the President pushed them all from his bed. Children, candy, nuts, and oranges spilled in a shower on the floor.

"Off with you!" their father shouted. "No one is to see the other gifts until all are dressed."

In a twinkling the children, hair hastily combed and shoes tied, were ready. The family gathered at the library door.

"Shut your eyes while your mother counts to ten," the President ordered. He squeezed his own as tightly as the rest.

"—seven, eight, nine, ten!" Mrs. Roosevelt counted. She flung open the door. Quentin shrieked with delight.

"A tree! A tree!" For there in the middle of the room stood the most beautiful Christmas tree ever. Better even than those of other years. Its pointed tip brushed the library ceiling. Its branches drooped with ornaments and ropes of tinsel.

"But why, Father?" Archie asked, bewildered. "I thought you did not wish to cut a tree. To set a fashion that might destroy our country's forests. And I thought you were angry with me after last night."

"Not really angry, son. For your mischief turned out well. You said a tree on the White House lawn needed cutting so another might have more sunlight. I began to wonder if the

same is true of the trees in the National Forests."

"So he asked Mr. Pinchot. Woke him up in the middle of the night," Mrs. Roosevelt added, smiling. "He assures your father that it is good for forests to be thinned, if trees are chosen carefully for cutting. Like thinning a row of radishes in a garden. Those that are left grow bigger and better."

"Three cheers for Mr. Pinchot!" Archie shouted. The family joined in heartily.

"Now three more for Archie," the President added. "Without his wish to make his little brother happy, the White House would have had no Christmas tree this morning."

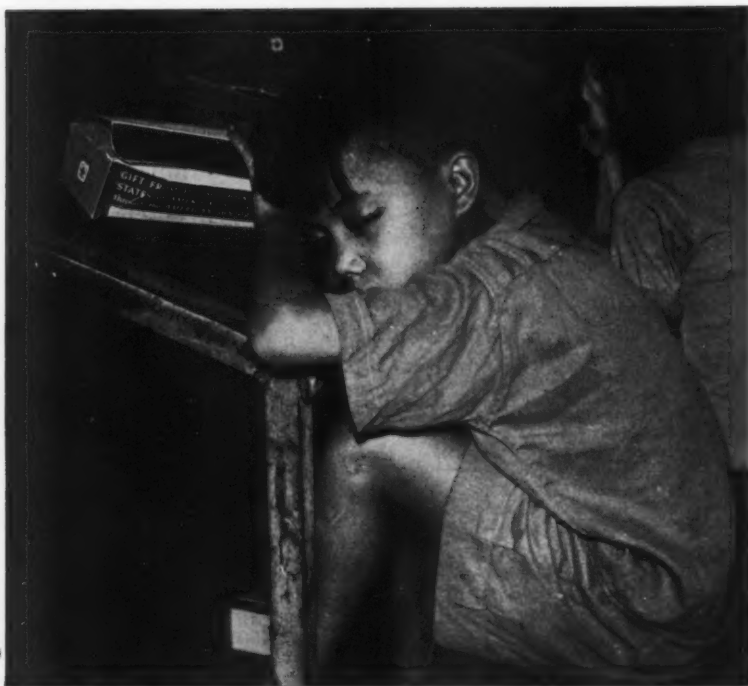
SINCE THE YEAR told about in this story the White House has never failed to have a Christmas tree. Last Christmas President and Mrs. Eisenhower had four decorated trees indoors and several on the White House grounds. Theodore Roosevelt would be glad to know that rangers choose and cut these carefully each year from America's National Forests.

Nowadays, as you know, many Christmas trees are grown on farms especially for cutting and selling. But many thousands of evergreens are thinned from America's National Forests each December to give neighbor trees a better chance to grow. When sold these have a tag saying:

"This tree brings a Christmas message from the great outdoors. Its cutting was not destructive but gave added room for other trees to grow faster and better. It was cut under the supervision of the United States Forest Service."

Perhaps you have picnicked or hiked in the National Forest nearest your home. Thanks to Teddy Roosevelt its beautiful protected trees have been saved for you (and some day your own children) to enjoy.





↑ Though all tired out and fast asleep in class, this refugee schoolboy from North Vietnam is taking no chances on anyone getting his precious gift box from the United States.

An ambulance of the Vietnam Red Cross, loaded with American Red Cross supplies, is on its way to bring help to the village of Sao Mai. →



← "Hong Thap Tu" means "Red Cross" in Vietnamese. Relief supplies are being distributed here in Saigon to people made homeless by fighting and fire.

Red C

When war and suffering
Red Cross did a great
to the unhappy people
Cross joined in with
to the refugee children
boxes, 200 school chests
the schools. The total
\$241,000.

Red Cross in Vietnam

suffering came to Vietnam, the great deal to show its friendliness people. The American Junior Red with the grown-ups and sent help children. They shipped 103,000 gift chests, and 3000 chalkboards for the total shipment was valued at



A happy time comes for children in an orphanage near Saigon when AJRC gift boxes are distributed by volunteers of the Vietnam Red Cross. →



↑ A mother in Vietnam holds precious supplies given her by Red Cross for her baby.





Illustrated by
William Hutchinson

Gunnar's face fell when his mother, who had been shopping, said, "No Christmas tree for us this year."

The Little Red Christmas Tree

By MEKKIN S. PERKINS

GUNNAR brushed a lock of sandy hair out of his blue eyes as he ran to open the door for his mother. Christmas was coming and his mother had been downtown shopping.

"Didn't you get a tree?" he asked.

"No Christmas tree for us this year," his

mother said. "There's not a tree left for sale in the whole city of Reykjavik."

At this, Gunnar's face fell. For a moment he could not think of anything to say. "We saw the trees from Norway unloaded from the ship. There were many hundreds!" he

spoke at last. "Mother, are you sure they have all been sold?"

"Every last one," said Mother.

"How about the artificial trees?" asked Gunnar.

"All sold too."

"We must get a tree somehow," declared big sister Magga.

"Yes, we must do that," agreed Gunnar, "or little Ollo and Arni will be heartbroken."

"Your Uncle Helgi might help us," suggested Mother, "but he is busy at present."

Amma, the children's grandmother, who sat in a corner knitting a dainty pink dress for 3-year-old Olla, now spoke up. "When I was a girl," she said, "we lived in the country. There were smoked mutton and other good things to eat at Christmas time. We were happy to get one piece of rock candy, a homemade candle, and, of course, something new to wear. But," she finished with emphasis, "we had no Christmas tree."

"That was long ago," Magga objected. "Now everyone in Iceland has a Christmas tree."

Gunnar was determined to get one—somehow. Hesitating a moment, he put on his jacket, snatched his cap and ran down the street, racking his brains as he went along.

Suddenly his eyes fell on a fir tree among the mountain ash in a neighbor's yard. An idea flashed into his mind and a smile came over his freckled face. Walking up to the house, he rang the doorbell and stood there twirling his cap until the lady opened the door.

"How do you do, Gunnar," she said.

"How do you do, frú Inga," Gunnar answered her greeting politely. He hesitated for a moment. "Won't you please sell us your fir tree?" he then pleaded. "All the trees from Norway have been sold and we have no Christmas tree."

"I am very sorry," frú Inga replied. "I cannot do that. There are so few trees in Iceland now because long ago many trees were cut down and the sheep ate the little ones. If we keep on planting thousands of little trees and

do not cut any down, some day we will have plenty and need not get any from Norway. I am truly sorry," she repeated with a kindly smile. "I cannot let you cut down my fir tree."

The boy sighed and thanked frú Inga politely. With bowed head, he turned around and walked slowly down the street. His brow wrinkled in a frown as he struggled to think of some other way to get a Christmas tree.

Turning a corner, he looked up suddenly and there was his Uncle Helgi's house. At sight of it, his mother's words echoed in his mind: "Your Uncle Helgi might help us, but he is busy at present." That gave Gunnar an idea. His face brightened. He broke into a run. "Uncle Helgi is busy, but if I help him, he might have time to teach me," he thought as he ran along. "I won't say a word to anyone. What a nice surprise it will be!"

At the thought he quickened his pace. He was panting when he reached his Uncle Helgi's house and explained the plan he had in mind. "And I will run your errands if you can help me," he promised.

The man smiled at the boy's eagerness. "I am busy," he admitted. "But I can find time to help you."

"Oh, thank you!" said Gunnar, with a sigh of relief.

The next few days he was busy running his uncle's errands as well as his own. He brought back many mysterious packages. Some were long and narrow; others, short and thick. He took them into his uncle's shed. Then from the shed came strange sounds.

The work was finished the day before Christmas. Gunnar secretly brought his "surprise" home, put it in the living room and locked the door.

By Christmas Eve everything was ready for the feast. The whole house had been cleaned. Lights glowed in every room. There was not a dark corner to be found anywhere. Smoked mutton and *laufabraud*, fancy fried Christmas cakes, and other good things to eat had been prepared.

Everyone had something new to wear.

Mother had a stylish dress that came from America. Magga wore a new plaid skirt. Father and the boys had new shirts, and Olla looked sweet in the new pink knitted dress. Amma had a new silk apron to wear with her long black native dress.

Gunnar had a hard time keeping Olla and Arni out of the living room until after supper. They were so excited. They kept asking: "Mamma, are you sure the Christmas Dwarfs came down from their workshops in the mountains? Are you sure they left presents for us. We have been such good children, for so long!" Hearing them chatter, Gunnar smiled to himself. The nine Christmas Dwarfs! What nonsense! Only little children believed in them!

For supper there was a rice pudding full of raisins, but with only one almond hidden somewhere in it. Also fancy fried cakes, *laufabraud*. A pitcher of juice made from the black crowberries the children had picked in the lava fields was passed around. Each person poured some of the juice over his pudding and took a piece of *laufabraud*. Then they dug into the pudding in search of the almond. Who had it: They looked at one another, wondering. Mother had placed a special present on the table for the person who found it.

For a while they ate in silence until suddenly Olla cried out: "I've got it! See!" She held up the almond. They gathered around and watched eagerly as Gunnar helped her take the wrappings off the present. Inside was a bag of chocolates, which the little girl proudly passed around.

After that they were all too excited to eat.

Olla and Arni kept begging Gunnar to let them see what was in the living room.

At last the great moment came. Beaming with pride, Gunnar opened the living room door and stood aside.

"Oh!" they all gasped. "A tree! We have a Christmas tree after all!"

"But it's red, not green like the trees around the house," exclaimed Arni.

"It is just like the trees your Uncle Helgi made for us when we were children," said Mother. "It is made of sticks covered with red paper and fitted together."

"Did Uncle Helgi make it?" asked Arni.

"Gunnar made it with Uncle Helgi's help," said Mother.

"It is beautiful!" exclaimed sister Magga.

"See the pretty lights!" shouted Olla, pointing at the flickering flames of the colored candles fastened at the flattened ends of the branches.

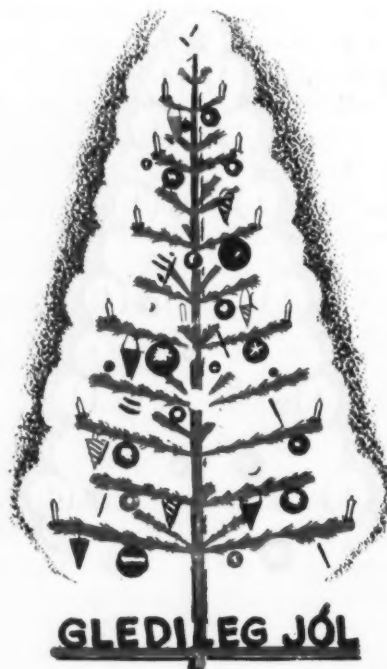
"And the basket!" said Arni, reaching for one of the tiny baskets of colored paper that hung here and there on the tree.

The children's happy faces shone in the twinkling candlelight caught and reflected in the shiny colored balls hanging from every branch.

They ran around the tree, examining it from the top to the cross-shaped base on which stood in big letters the words:

GLEDILEG JÓL, meaning MERRY CHRISTMAS.

Holding hands, they danced around it until their mother made them stop. "We must first sing our Christmas carols," she said. And so they sang in their native tongue, Icelandic, "Silent Night, Holy Night," and other carols.



When they had finished singing, they kissed one another on the cheek and wished one another a Merry Christmas. Then Mother gave each one of them a little paper basket off the tree. "Oh, good! Candy and raisins!" exclaimed Arni and Olla, pulling some out and eating.

After that, Mother had a rare treat for them—an orange apiece. Then she passed out the presents. There was a doll for Olla, a sled for Arni, a pair of skis for Gunnar, and a book for Magga.

For a while they sat admiring their presents and gazing at the tree. Then they danced around it again and played games. Even little Olla was permitted to stay up as long as she wished this one night. The lights were kept burning all night long in honor of the Child born so long ago in Bethlehem.

Olla soon dropped off to sleep and had to

ANSWERS TO PUZZLE, PAGE 8

ACROSS

- | | | |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| (2) men | (11) born | (15) homes |
| (3) carry | (12) child | (16) tree |
| (6) popcorn | (13) night | (17) taste |
| (10) sled | (14) high | (20) rim |

DOWN

- | | | |
|-----------|---------------|----------|
| (1) merry | (7) Christmas | (18) air |
| (4) cold | (8) sleigh | (19) Tom |
| (5) crib | (9) bright | |

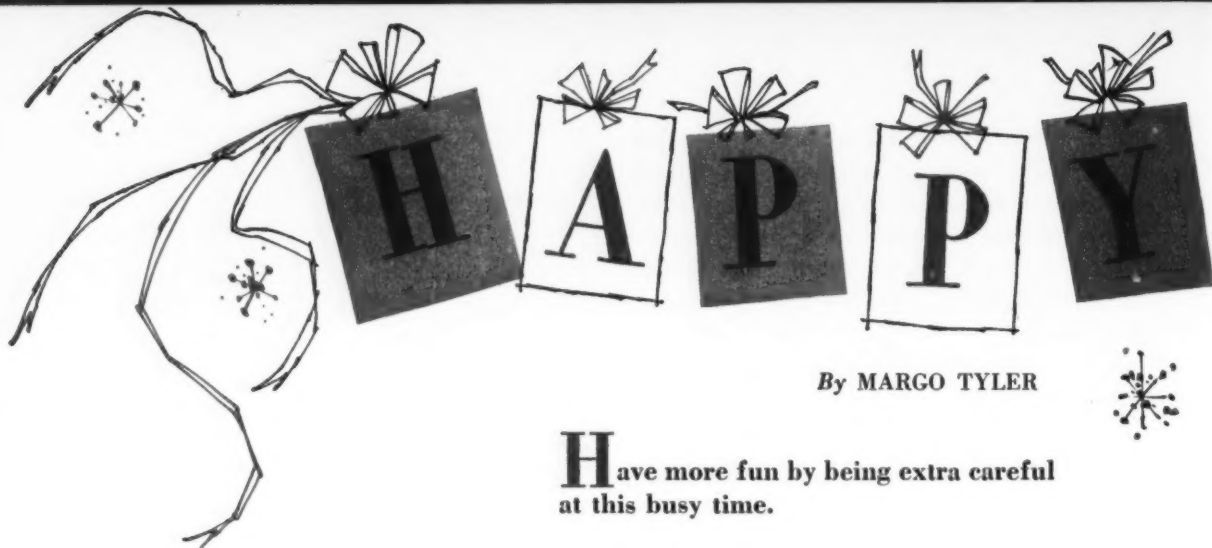
be carried to bed. Arni, too, became drowsy and went to his room.

Gunnar was determined to stay up all night. But before long his eyes grew heavy. He, too, began to nod. At last, happy though tired, he fell asleep in his chair before the little red Christmas tree he had made with his own hands.

THE END



Gunnar fell asleep beside the little red Christmas tree.



By MARGO TYLER

Have more fun by being extra careful at this busy time.

Accidents don't take a holiday unless you help prevent them.

Place your Christmas tree in a bucket of water or wet dirt, away from heating units.

Pick up wrappings promptly and keep toys out of the way of household traffic.

You can help mother protect baby by keeping your toys, breakable decorations, and other harmful objects out of his reach.



Illustrated by
Tim Evans

HOLIDAYS

Heed directions for mechanical and electrical toys.

Open fireplaces are dangerous. Be sure a sturdy screen is in place when the fire is burning.

Let Daddy use a stepladder to put decorations up high. Don't try to reach yourself.

Inspect electric cords to make sure they are in good condition and that they bear the UL label.

Don't use candles on the tree or near flimsy curtains or flammable decorations.

Always handle sharp pointed objects carefully. Don't run when you are carrying them.

Your toys can be used for a long time if you keep them in good repair and use them wisely.

Safety all year-round will help make your New Year happy.





Wm. H. Hawkins

Robert Turner finds that threading a needle is not too easy. But he's getting plenty of help from Joe Duran (L), David Apodaca, and Dale Valencia (R). These boys in the fifth grade, Hinsdale School (Pueblo, Colo.) are making Christmas stocking monkeys for Junior Red Cross.



Merrily,





In New Haven Chapter, Conn., these juniors make holiday cutouts for servicemen in overseas hospitals.



Ybks Studio

Pupils at South Eighth School, Newark, N. J., display Christmas presents they made for shut-ins.

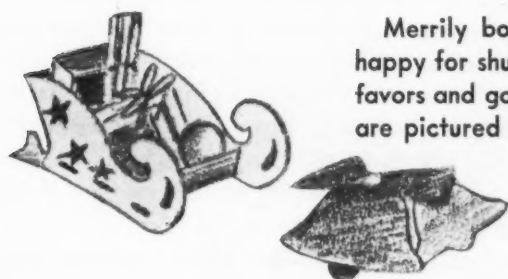


We help, too—Polio patients at Rancho Los Amigos (Whittier Chapter, Calif.) make Christmas presents for veterans hospital.



Using coat hangers and gay tissue paper, sixth graders at Samuel Coleridge Taylor School (Baltimore, Md.) make Christmas wreaths for hospitals.

Merrily



Merrily boys and girls plan to make the holidays happy for shut-ins. They fill stockings, trim trees, make favors and gay toys, just as Junior Red Cross members are pictured on these pages as doing.

HOW THE LITTLEST ELF HELPED SANTA



By RUTH EVERDING LIBBEY

Illustrated by
Dagmar Wilson

ALL THE ELVES thought that Tiny, the Littlest Elf, was spending the whole day playing.

"Well, I am not playing," said Tiny as he blew one soap bubble after another out of one of Santa's old clay pipes.

"Then what are you doing?" asked one of the Biggest Elves as he fastened a red wheel on a red wagon. "Mixing gooey colored suds and blowing bubbles sure looks like playing to me."

"Well, I am trying to invent something to help Santa," said Tiny as he blew a wavery purple bubble up in the air.

"That's a funny way of helping," said one of the Next-Biggest Elves as he carefully packed twelve shiny jacks and a black rubber ball in a blue box. "How could soap bubbles ever help Santa? Tiny, you are the silliest little Elf I ever heard of."

"Well, if my invention works it will help

Santa a whole lot. You just wait and see," smiled Tiny, as a floppy pink bubble quivered and burst right on the tip of his pointed little nose.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" laughed a Next-Next-Biggest Elf as he closed the wee door of a cuckoo clock. "I suppose you'll be telling us next that Santa can use your bubbles for decorating his Christmas trees."

"Well, I wasn't going to tell anyone until my invention works," sighed Tiny, the Littlest Elf. "But you guessed it. Santa needs tree ornaments very much. He is worried because he hasn't nearly enough colored balls."

"Shh! Shh!" shished a Biggest Elf as he looked out the window. "Here comes Santa. He looks so tired."

One of the Next-Biggest Elves opened the door for Santa.

A Next-Next-Biggest Elf helped him take off his snow-covered red overcoat. While an-



other Next-Next-Biggest Elf brought him his old comfy warm slippers.

"Thank you, my Elves," said Santa. "Now let's all see what Mrs. Santa has for our supper. Good hot thick soup, I hope. Then later I'll hear your report of the day."

After Santa and the Elves had emptied their big china bowls of thick soup and emptied their big glass bowls of bread and raisin pudding, they gathered around the glowing fire.

Tiny, the Littlest Elf, climbed up on the mantel and took Santa's favorite clay pipe out of the pipe-rack. Then he scrambled down and gave it to Santa.

Santa took a burning twig from the crackling fire and lit his pipe. Then he sank back in his big easy chair.

"Now I am ready to hear what you have accomplished today," said Santa. "Biggest Elves, we'll start with you."

The Biggest Elves all sang out together . . .

*"On all the wagons
We put wheels,
On all the doll shoes
We glued heels."*

Then the Next-Biggest Elves shouted . . .

*"We counted jacks
And rubber balls,
Then made gay hats
For lady dolls."*

The Next-Next-Biggest Elves said . . .

*"We painted letters
On building blocks,
And fastened birdies
In cuckoo clocks."*

"A fine, FINE report," smiled Santa. "Now Tiny, my Littlest Elf, what did you do all day long?"

"Oh, he did nothing but play! PLAY! PLAY!" shouted all the elves together. "He did nothing but blow soap bubbles and mix

colored sudsy suds the whole day long."

"Why, Tiny," sighed Santa, "you knew how I needed ornaments for the Christmas trees. You could have cut out silver stars or strung popcorn and cranberries. I am very, VERY disappointed in you."

"But Santa, let me tell you about the invention I have been working on," sobbed Tiny. "My invention, when it works, will help you ever and EVER so much."

"That will do, Tiny," said Santa. "You can explain things to me in the morning. I am tired. I am going to take a nap now."

The elves began to pop corn over the glowing coals. That is all except Tiny. He took a little box of green powder out of his pocket and poured it in the big bucket of gooey suds.



UP

up

The suds foamed up

Tiny scooped some in his old clay pipe. Then he gently blew out bubble after bubble. The bubbles bounced on the mantel. They bounced on the floor. But they didn't burst.

"Oh, LOOK!" Tiny called to the Elves. "My bubbles aren't breaking. My invention is working!"

"Shh! Shh! You'll wake Santa, you silly little Elf," whispered one of the Biggest Elves. "Can't you see that he's sound asleep?"

"So he is," whispered Tiny, "I can hear him snore. Oh, my, I have the best idea of all to help Santa."

Tiny climbed up on the back of Santa's chair. He gently removed the clay pipe from Santa's lips.

"What are you doing, you silly little Elf?" scolded one of the Next-Biggest Elves.

"Wait and see," chuckled Tiny as he filled Santa's favorite pipe with his newest foamy-suds invention. He then leaned over and put the pipe stem back between Santa's red lips.

Snore! Snore! SNORE! snored Santa as his lips puffed in and puffed out. Then the most beautiful colored bubbles began to float out of his pipe.

The Elves stopped popping corn and gazed in amazement.

"Well, get busy and help me," cried Tiny. "We must gather up all of the dozens and dozens of sparkly balls that Santa is blowing."

All of a sudden Santa sneezed. He opened his eyes with a start. "What's this? WHAT'S THIS?" he cried as he picked up his pipe with a beautiful red ball still in its bowl.

"Well, my invention worked at last," said Tiny. "While you were asleep you snored and puffed . . . and SNORED and PUFFED these dozens and dozens of colored balls. They won't break and there are enough to decorate your dozens and dozens of Christmas trees."

"Littlest Elf, I am sorry that I was cross with you. I can't begin to tell you how much you have helped me. The fact is you have helped save the day," smiled Santa, as he patted Tiny on the top of his tiny head.

Hanukkah Candles

*Eight little candles
Shining so bright.
One candle for
Each Hanukkah night.*

*There to remind us
Of eight holy nights,
When one little candle
Shone so very bright.*

MICHELE RUJA
Campus Laboratory School
San Diego State College (Calif.)

★ Christmas Is Here

Joyfully

Words and Music by
Beth Milliken Joerger

Christ-mas is here, Christ-mas is here, Hap-pi-est day of all the year,
We cel-e-brate birth-day of one Who came to earth as God's own son,

Christ-mas is here, Christ-mas is here, Ev-'ry-one's full of cheer;
Christ-mas is here, Christ-mas is here, An-gels are hov-'ring near;

It's the time for fruit-ful liv-ing, It's the time for gen-'rous giv-ing
Lift your voice in joy-ful sing-ing, While your heart a gift is bring-ing,

Christ-mas is here, Christ-mas is here, Hap-pi-est day of the year....
Christ-mas is here, Christ-mas is here, Hol-i-est day of the year....

Illustrated by Jo Fisher Irwin

